

oughly meaningful ritual act to guarantee the firmness and longevity of the construction, equivalent to the universal ideology of the creation of cosmos.

Literature

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FOLK BELIEFS IN THE UDMURT SYSTEM OF THE CALENDAR RITUALS

Margarita Khrushcheva. Astrakhan, Russia

The system of the Udmurt calendar rituals and holidays is alike to the similar systems of other Finno-Ugric peoples, first of all in the very principle of its organisation. But summarising all the dialectal variants, the classification of holidays according to the quantitative indication shows their differences in structure and in structural functions.

1. The quantitative index:

- 1) rites composed of the maximum of rituals;
- 2) rites composed of the minimum of rituals;
- 3) rites composed of various quality of rituals (in variants).

2. The functional index:

- 1) rites, including in itself an element of any work action;
- 2) rites, the main function of which is the maintenance of the future wealth; they are connected with prayers and sacrifices;
- 3) rites and holidays, including home-rounds with treating, and also singing and dancing;
- 4) rites and holidays including actions, which later acquired sheer entertaining action¹.

As a result of the morphological and syntagmatic analysis of the Udmurt calendar rites and holidays it is possible to single out several topic ritual-blocks which can serve as a basis for some separate rites and holidays and be included into polycomponent ritual holidays. These blocks are classified in 4 groups:

I. Ritual actions connected with work.

II. Rites connected with beliefs. They consist of praying (*Vösyasykon*); prayers (*Kurisykon*); sacrifices (*Myzh seiton*); meals (*Sysykon*); thanksgiving (*Tau-karon*).

III. Rites connected with holidays, either carrying out its magic function or having lost it: riding or walking round in homes or among groups of people; a feast; masking; fortune telling; riding; bathing.

IV. Ritual actions connected with poetic-musical folklore.

Among ritual actions in the four groups the following are the most frequent: praying; sacrifice; meals; thanksgiving; riding from place to place having a feast, singing and dancing. These are the rituals which make up the frame of a ritual model. Other components vary, including singing and dancing.

Reflecting the unity of man and nature in the world outlook of the Udmurts, the calendar rites were dominated by praying to one or another god or sacrificing for him. Praying was not always connected with sacrificing, whereas sacrificing has always been connected with praying and a meal (sometimes the meal was substituted by a feast). There were two kinds of sacrifices: in the form of an alive animal or bird killed in the ritual site, or in the form of food pieces and beer or *kumyshka* drops.

In calendar sacrifices there prevailed the latter (even while sacrificing a living animal, some food, mainly flour, was also sacrificed according to the ritual). Praying – sacrificing – meal – thanksgiving could make a separate rite.

Another dominant in calendar holidays is a walking round from house to house with treating, and also with songs and dances. The home rounds could

be made by maskers (on Christmastide holiday – *Vozho dyr*, and also *Pörtmaskon*), in other cases clothes were merely festive. The home-rounds were also differentiated: some rites included only relatives, in others this round never missed a house in the village and the rite was repeated in every house.

By the descriptions of the 19th century ethnographers two Udmurt holidays were held without praying: *Tol sur* (‘winter beer’) and autumn *Pörtmaskon*; they consisted of a feast and home rounds of mummerly with songs and dances (in some northern region – without songs).

The full ritual formula is concentrated in two holidays: *Gery potton* (‘leaving for the field’) – the first day; *Yö kelyan* (‘seeing ice off’). But *Yö kelyan* was a part of the many-day holiday *Akashka* (*Akayashka*) and by the 19th century descriptions it took place between the ‘Leaving for the field’ holiday and the ‘Taking out the wooden plough’ day.

Akashka had several dialect variants. The combination of them in one scheme reconstructs the whole cycle of rituals and rites of this main holiday of the Udmurts. Many factors testify to the fact that it was the Udmurt principal holiday. In the course of the four or five days of this holiday praying and sacrificing to all the principal Udmurt gods were performed: to *Inmar*, the god of the Earth *Kyldysin-mummy*, to the god of the weather, *Kvaz* and also to the forest spirits *Nules-murt*, the ghost of the water *Vu-murt*, to *Vorshud* of the kin and family, to the late ancestors.

These were held during the main activities: driving out the cattle, ploughing, sowing, harrowing. People’s life depended on the health and safety of cattle, on the abundant crop and so all the rituals of praying and sacrificing connected with work were aimed at the maintenance of wealth by protector gods. *Akashka* was at the same time the last holiday before the great hard work during harvest time, and as the 19th century ethnographers wrote, the Udmurts had a rest before this toil.

So *Akashka* is a polyfunctional holiday. More than being the first in the festive row of rites, *Akashka* proved to be the central holiday in the whole ritual system of the Udmurts both in its structure and in its significance as it bears the full formula of the whole calendar ritual system and other rites and holidays are only its variants.

The opposite pole of *Akashka* is perhaps the autumn *Pörtmaskon*, consisting of the round rituals of all the village houses with treating, songs and masked dances. It was opened by the autumn-winter cycle: *Pörtmaskon uybyt vetlon*, *Uybyt yuon* during the time of the evil spirit *Vozho*, and completed with the rite *Vozho kelyan* (‘seeing *Vozho* off’). All the three rituals were attended by disguising, masking, home-rounds, singing and dancing. We may suppose that the autumn *Pörtmaskon* opened the cycle of rituals.

So we may speak about the two dominants in the system of the Udmurt calendar rites: praying (*Vösyaskons*) with sacrificing, and home-rounds with songs. Each of these dominants has its own sphere of action.

Prayings with sacrifices took place constantly, even outside certain holidays (e.g. in the case of a drought, etc.). Home rounds turned out to be concentrated in its certain zone (the autumn-winter period) and were completed in spring – in *Akashka* holiday.

The system of the Udmurt calendar rituals can be compared to the Moebius' strip in which *Vösyaskons* took place without interruption, and home-rounds with songs and dances turned out to be transition zones to another dimension. Parallelism and polylayerism act on different levels of this system, but we can always find in it a moment of transition from one condition to the other.

Prayings were an inseparable part of the year's ritual cycle. The rhythm of prayings (*Vösyaskons*) was traditionally determined by several factors: by the solar calendar, the rhythm of the life of nature, the change of seasons and the seasonal work accordingly. Addressing to this or that deity or protector-spirit was not only determined by the functional direction of the prayer (*kuriskyon*) but also by its calendar time. The world surrounding the man, the world of nature was (according to the view of the Udmurts) a whole system, in which man was a natural part of it, as well as his family, his kin, his community. Nature itself was spiritualised by the notions of man, and all that was alive, including man himself, possessed a soul, a spirit. Probably, primordially the folk religion of the Udmurts as well as that of other peoples was characterised by polytheism, and with the influence of the Christianity monotheism began to take shape, about which almost all the 19th century ethnographers used to write. In the folk vocabulary there remained ancient words – notions exposing hierarchical structure in the picture of the universe. And there was also a fairly elaborate pantheon of deities, personifying nature forces, which had a certain sphere of action and influence upon the fruit of people's work.

All the work activities of the Udmurts, such as hunting and early agriculture, were aimed at the survival of not only one individual but at the survival of the kin as a whole, and the families as parts of the kin. A peculiar psychology, reflected in all the components of the folklore from prayers (*kuriskon*) to songs, was shaped.

According to the Udmurt notion, each kin and each man had his own keeper (*a keeper-feeder* as he is called in the prayers), who also kept his eye on the morals and the traditional way of the man's behavior. If he happened to break the moral and traditional codes, the deity could inflict a punishment.

The notion 'soul' is expressed by the word *lud*, and 'spirit' by the word *urt*. The keeper-feeder was denoted by the notion of *Vorshud*, the name of which

(feminine) became the name of the whole kin. If we try to bring the names of deities, mentioned in *kuriskyons* into the scheme of the universe, we shall get rather clear accordances.

IN SYÖR (Overworld)

Inmumy (The Mother of the Heaven)
Shundy-Mumy (The Mother of the Sun)
Gudyry-Mumy (The Mother of the Thunder)

IN DOONNAE (The world of the sky)

Inmar (The God of Air, the God of Skies)
Kwaz (*Northern-Udmurt*) (The God of Weather, the God of Rain and Wind)
Töl-Peri (The Spirit of Wind)

TAPAL-DOONNAE (This, our world)

Nules-nyunyua, Nulesmurt (The God of Wood and Winds)
Kyl dysin, Kylchin, Mu-Kyldysin (The God of the Earth, the Creator)
Mezha-Vozmas (The God, Protector of Headland, who walks along the headland and guards the crops)
Bydzym-Nyunya (The Protector of Cattle)
Invu (The God of Water)
Vu-murt (Vu-Kuzyo) – (The God, Spirit of a Pool, River, Stream, Lake, etc.)
Vorshud (The Keeper-feeder, the Protector of the Kin)

HOME-SPIRITS

Korka-murt (at home)
God-murt (in the yard)
Muncho-murt (in the bath-house)
Obin-murt (in the barn)
Obin-Kuzyo

SOPAL-DOONNAE (The world of the Dead Forefathers)

EVIL SPIRITS:

Vozho (Evil Spirits)
Cher (The God of Illness)
Kutys (Evil Spirits, sending illness or spirits of those who died a violent death)

ADAPTED EVIL SPIRITS:

Keremet
Aktash
Shaitan
Akshan (The God of Twilight)

In the prayers we observe a definite seasonal prevalence while addressing this or that deity. So, during the period of action of these evil spirits, *Vozho*, rituals were performed, in which ancestor spirits came (masking at *Pörtmaskon*, *Vozho kelyan*), then they appealed to the god and spirits of water (river). Spring is the time of sending the cattle to grass, prayers were addressed to *Bydzym nyunya*, to the god of woods *Nulesmurt*. Beginning to plough, they prayed to

the god of earth, to Creator *Kyldysin* and the god of sky, *Inmar*. In summer, during hay-mowing and reaping, prayers were addressed to *Kyldysin*, *Inmar*. In autumn thanksgiving prayers and sacrifices were performed to all the protectors and especially to the ancestor spirits. *Vorshud* was addressed constantly almost in all prayers. Perhaps before the great influence of Christianity the seasonal prevalence in the actions of the deities was more differentiated, which is confirmed by the tradition of sacrificing, where every deity and spirit got its own sacrifice.

Calendar folklore in its entirety shows peculiarities of the world outlook of the people, their ethnic psychology and ethnic aesthetics. Calendar rites and holidays of the Udmurts developed into a rather secluded system, strictly regulated by traditions, the breaking of which was followed by punishment, up to the expulsion from the community.

This system reveals the following co-ordinates: the world of man (man – family – kin); the world of nature (in which the man and his kin act) and nature out of the sphere of his influence, the world of gods and spirits, personifying nature and its forces. Temporal co-ordinates are the past (the world of ancestors), present and future, which are in mutual relationship, for the past influences the present and future. The mediator between these worlds is a priest *Vösyas* or the eldest man in the kin in the family, who carries this communicative function. So the prayer (*Kuriskon*) is an original channel of communication performed in the frame of the strict ritual. The *Vösyas*'s function differs from the function of a shaman, though many factors prove that shamanism existed among the Udmurts, but just in its prime. Its main difference from the developed institute of shamanism and the shaman's role in it is first of all seen in the fact that the *Vösyas* does not represent a unique personality endowed with some unique abilities.

In principle any man of mature or old age could be elected *Vösyas*, he was a representative of his kin, expressing collective consciousness, collective needs. And the present social rite of the *Vösyas* was not for life. As we can see from the 19th century ethnographic literature and also according to the information of contemporary informers, *Vösyas* was elected at the Council of Elders. He was a man who distinguished himself not only with his profound knowledge of traditions, rituals, but also with his impeccable moral face, eloquence, strict behavior in life, and authority. For the *Vösyas*, hard drinking (except at ritual feasts) and foul language was out of the question.

The Council of Elders appointed the *Vösyas*'s assistants for every performed ritual, and also stated the time of performing prayers (*Vösyaskons*) and the beginning of the agricultural works.

So the functions of the *Vösyas* were strictly limited to the traditional role of

the mediator between superior forces and people. He was also responsible for performances of sacrifice rituals and prayings, he kept his eye to the traditional behavior of people, causing the benevolent influence of the gods and spirits for getting good crops, etc.

At the present moment *Vösyaskon*'s are performed by the *Vösyas* and by lay-brothers who are appointed by the elders of the village. They wear special clothes and the main acting person, the *Vösyas* girds himself with a special belt. Yet, while analysing the descriptions of the calendar rituals of sacrificing

TABLE A

VÖSYAS (PRIEST)
Sacrificing

Season	S*	M*	Where	To whom	Rite
Winter		+	Bydzym quala		Vyle arshid. Tuly suton
	+		At the river by the icehole	To the spirit of the river	Zozho kelyan
	+		At the river		Yo kelyan (Ae kelyan)
	+		At the river		Pörtmaskon
Spring	+		In the field at sacred fir-tree		Guzhdor
			In qualas	Vorshud	- " -
			In the Bydzym quala	InmarInvu	Akashka
			Vösyaskon	Vorshud, 'To the triad', spirits of woods, water	- " -
			In the hut(Tau karon)	Inmar	Tau Karon
			Bydzym quala	Invu, Inmar, Kyldysin	Tulys quali nyron
	+		In the field at sacred firtree	Kyldysin	Tulys sur Busy vuos
Summer			In the field	Vorshud, Kyldysin	Herber
Autumn	+		Bydzym quala	Inmar, Vorshud, Kyldysin, Invu	Zok quala oshpi orchyton

*S – Sacrifices; M – Meals

(both those of living birds or animals and food – *kumyska*, beer, bread, batch) we can see that prayings, and prayers correspondingly, were not only the prerogative of the *Vösyas*. *Kuriskon* could be performed by the house-owner, that is the elder of the family (see the table).

So in the tradition there existed the ‘double circle’ of prayings, reflecting the interests of the kin and those of the family. At some *Vösyaskons* house-

TABLE B

A HOUSE-OWNER
Sacrificing

Season	S*	M*	Where	To whom	Rite
Winter		+	Bydzym qala		
	+	+	At the river	To the spirit of the river	Yozho kelyan
	+		At the river	- " -	Yö kelyan
Spring		+	At home		Bydzym nunal
		+	At the river	Vu-murt	Akashka
		+	At home	Bytsym-nyunya	- " -
		+	In the field	Mezya-Vozmas, Mu Kyldysin, Vorshud	- " -
	+	+	In the field	In the honour of the fore fathers, Inmar	- " -
	+	+	- " -	Kyldysin	
	+	+	Qala Yauskyna	Vorshud	
Summer			House qala	Vorshud	Herber
			In the meadow	Inmar	Turnan
	+		In the field	Inmar, Kyldysin	Aran dyr
Autumn			On the boundary of the field	Mezya-Vozmas	Zol qala oshpi orchoton
The beginning of winter				Bytsym-nyunya	Pirdan seton

*S – Sacrifices; M – Meals

owners said *kuriskons* together with the *Vösyas* (as a rule, during sacrificing). In other cases the role of the *Vösyas* was performed by the house-owner.

According to the ethnographers *kuriskons* were also pronounced by the *Vösyas* aloud, in a sing-song manner. Perhaps, much depended on dialects and local traditions of pronouncing *kuriskons*. House-owners pronounced *kuriskons* in the narrow circle and here their oratory was not as important as in the case of a *Vösyas*'s.

It is probable that the observed 'double circle' of prayings could shape the two manners of *kuriskon* performing: 'oratory' and melodious (melodic-recitative).

In the descriptions of *kuriskons* long (prolonged) prayings up to half an hour recited by the *Vösyas* are mentioned. The artistic form of *kuriskons* was formed and perfected just in the creative work of the *Vösyas*. At the same time in calendar rites many rituals required a short prayer. A great number of Udmurt *kuriskons* are rather short formulas.

Perhaps just the *kuriskons* recited by house-owners (in the field, by the river, at home, in the home *qala*) used to be short and consist in verbal formulas of prayers.

Notes

¹Functional index can be combined, forming contextual polyfunctional dependence.

POLTERGEIST IN FOLKLORE AND BELIEFS OF THE KOMI PEOPLE

Nikolai Konakov. Syktyvkar, Komi

The famous Finnish linguist and ethnologist Mathias Aleksanteri Castrén visited the basin of the Lower and Middle Pechora in 1840 during his first long-lasting and fruitful research expedition in North Eurasia (1838-1844). During his stay with the Nenets, Komi and Russian inhabitants, the Finnish scholar got into a regrettably unpleasant situation. He was considered to be a wizard.

This story began in the Russian old-believers' village of Ust-Tsilma. Cul-